United Nations A/55/1004–S/2001/645

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
28 June 2001

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 64
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 28 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 26 June 2001, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 28 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the statement made by Dr. Christodoulos Christodoulou, Interior Minister of the Greek Cypriot administration, at the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, held in New York from 6 to 8 June 2001, and to bring to your kind attention the following.

At the outset, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Greek Cypriot official has devoted his entire statement to making false accusations against Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is hardly compatible with the theme and spirit of the said session. He has unabashedly abused the General Assembly special session for propaganda purposes rather than focusing on issues relating to the Habitat Agenda. Since the Turkish Cypriot side is denied the right of reply at the General Assembly, I am compelled to respond to his allegations in writing.

Dr. Christodoulou has claimed that "Cyprus achieved significant socio-economic growth between independence, in 1960, and 1974". This statement is an attempt to cover up the fact that the Cyprus question began, not in 1974, but in 1963, as a result of the destruction, by force of arms, of the partnership Republic of Cyprus by the Greek Cypriot side. This is why a United Nations peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) has been in the island since 1964. It is ridiculous to claim that there was "socio-economic growth" at a time when 30,000 Turkish Cypriot refugees fleeing Greek Cypriot aggression were forced to live in enclaves, all Turkish Cypriots were being persecuted, attacked and harassed on a daily basis and the Turkish Cypriot areas were subjected to inhuman embargoes by the Greek Cypriot administration. The following extracts from the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council aptly describe the dark period between 1963 and 1974:

> "190. In addition to losses incurred in agriculture and in industry during the first part of the year, the Turkish [Cypriot] community had lost other sources of its income including the salaries of over 4,000 persons who were employed by the Cyprus Government and by public and private concerns located in the Greek Cypriot Zones. The trade of the Turkish [Cypriot] community had declined considerably during the period, owing to the existing situation, and unemployment had reached a very high level, as approximately 25,000 Turkish Cypriots had become refugees. Expenditure of the Turkish Communal Chamber on development and other projects, as well as other expenditure, had dropped considerably as a yearly subsidy formerly received from the Government had ceased to be granted in 1964. ... In accordance with the figures published by the Turkish [Cypriot] Communal Chamber, the number of persons receiving some kind of assistance from the Red Crescent relief amounted to about 56,000, including 25,000 displaced persons, 23,500 unemployed and 7,500 dependents of missing persons, disabled persons and others.
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> "...
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> "221. ... Thus in recent weeks, UNFICYP has been devoting major efforts towards eliminating or lessening the hardship experienced by many Turkish

communities in Cyprus because of the economic restrictions which have been imposed by the Government [Greek Cypriot administration] of Cyprus.

"222. ... the economic restrictions being imposed against the Turkish communities in Cyprus, ... in some instances have been so severe as to amount to a veritable siege ..." (S/5950 of 10 September 1964)

The Greek Cypriot Minister has referred to "Turkish invasion" and "occupied areas". I would like to emphasize that the only "occupation" in Cyprus is the 37-year-long occupation of the seat of government of the "Republic of Cyprus" by the Greek Cypriot side. Following the Greek coup d'état in Cyprus in July 1974, Turkey had no choice but to intervene in accordance with its rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee in order to prevent the annexation of the island by Greece to save the Turkish Cypriot people from total annihilation at the hands of the Greek Cypriots and the invading Greek troops. It will be recalled that the then Greek Cypriot leader, Archbishop Makarios, in his address to the Security Council on 19 July 1974, confirmed that it was in fact Greece, not Turkey, that had invaded the island in 1974.

Dr. Christodoulou also alleged that the question of refugees came about in 1974. The question of refugees, as also documented by the Secretary-General's reports during that period, first began in 1958 when the Greek Cypriot terrorist organization EOKA's gunmen, in their violent campaign to annex the island to Greece, drove 6,000 Turkish Cypriots from their homes in 33 villages; and then in 1963 when the Turkish Cypriot people were subjected to violence and displaced as a result of the Greek Cypriot onslaught. The Turkish Cypriot people who were then forced to evacuate 103 villages had to take refuge in relatively secure enclaves and live under inhuman conditions for 11 years until the Turkish intervention in 1974.

Dr. Christodoulou has referred to "substantial growth achieved since 1974". This pertains to South Cyprus controlled by the Greek Cypriot administration, which purports to be the "Government of Cyprus". Under this usurped title, the Greek Cypriot administration is receiving all international assistance, while preventing the extension of any technical or financial assistance to Northern Cyprus from international sources. Dr. Christodoulou has failed to mention the embargoes his administration has been imposing on the Turkish Cypriot people since 1963, which extends to all spheres of life including trade and tourism, travel and communication as well as sports and cultural activities. These inhuman embargoes not only curtail the economic and social development of the Turkish Cypriot people but also infringe upon their human and civil rights.

While referring to the economic situation, the Greek Cypriot Minister also has had the audacity to claim that the Greek Cypriot administration "is taking into consideration the needs of the whole of Cyprus", while his regime has been imposing the aforementioned embargoes on the Turkish Cypriot people. This is not at all surprising in view of the fact that for the Greek Cypriot side "the needs of the whole of Cyprus" means the needs of only the Greek Cypriots.

Dr. Christodoulou has alluded to the so-called "enforced division" of the island and "severance of the centuries-old settlement system" in an attempt to falsely accuse the Turkish Cypriot side. In this regard, I would like to remind the Greek Cypriot Minister that the division of the island was caused by the Greek Cypriot

attacks on the Turkish Cypriot people, as was also evident in the successive reports of the Secretary-General on Cyprus for the 1964-1974 period.

As for the allegations of "deformation of demographic characteristics of the population of Cyprus", I should like to emphasize that in line with its attempts to change the demographic structure of the island through ethnic cleansing, the Greek Cypriot administration introduced thousands of soldiers and settlers from Greece. I should also like to remind the Greek Cypriot Minister that at the centre of the Greek Cypriot administration's policy was the Akritas Plan, a plan prepared by the Greek Cypriot leadership at the time, to ethnically cleanse Cyprus of its Turkish Cypriot population and to turn Cyprus into a Greek island. In line with this notorious plan, the Greek Cypriot armed elements massacred hundreds of innocent Turkish Cypriots, including three-day-old babies, women and elderly people in an effort to exterminate the Turkish Cypriots or to force them out of Cyprus. Mass graves at Atlilar, Muratağa and Sandallar stand as evidence of the unspeakable crimes committed by the Greek Cypriots against the Turkish Cypriot people.

Even today the inhuman treatment of the few hundred Turkish Cypriots remaining in Southern Cyprus continues. The European Court of Human Rights, on 23 May 2001, found the Greek Cypriot administration guilty of ill-treatment of nine Turkish Cypriots while in detention in Southern Cyprus and ordered the illegal regime to pay compensation to each of the applicants. Furthermore, in April 2001, Dr. Christodoulou himself, in his capacity as the Interior Minister, faced accusations for the mistreatment of around 100 Turkish Cypriot gypsies by the Greek Cypriot authorities in Southern Cyprus. An editorial entitled "Reaction to Gypsies raises uncomfortable questions", published in the *Cyprus Mail* (South Cyprus) dated 10 April 2001, addressed this issue and its implications for the search for a settlement in Cyprus:

> "Is the government's plan to set up a kind of leper colony, miles away from any other community, in which to throw all undesirable visitors such as gypsies and illegal immigrants? This smacks of official racial discrimination and, regrettably, is consistent with the government's policy for dealing with Turkish Cypriots who have arrived from the occupied north. Most have been moved into run-down housing in what used to be known as the Turkish Cypriot quarter of Limassol and can now be described as a Turkish ghetto ...
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> "The implications of this behaviour should be seriously considered by the political leadership, which has been fighting for the re-unification of the island under a federal government for close to three decades. It may just be that Greek Cypriots do not want the re-unification of the island if this means living next door to a Turkish Cypriot. Would the Greek Cypriot public really be as happy as it claims with a solution that guaranteed the three fundamental freedoms — of movement, settlement and property? Would Paphians be happy if the Turkish Cypriots swarmed to their town or would they be holding protest demonstrations to stop them? What would the residents of Kotsiatis say if Turkish Cypriots decided to return to their homes in the village? ...
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> "... the xenophobic reaction to the arrival of a few dozen gypsies would seem to suggest that there is a gulf between what the politicians see as the ideal form of a Cyprus settlement and what Greek Cypriots actually want."

Accusations regarding "the systematic change of official toponyms", in Northern Cyprus demonstrate that the Greek Cypriot administration cannot even accept the fact that the Turkish Cypriot people have as much right as the Greek Cypriots to refer to toponyms of their homeland in their own language. The island have always enjoyed dual place names due to the existence of two peoples of different ethnic backgrounds and languages in the island.

As for the allegations regarding historical and cultural heritage, it is important to stress that the authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus work diligently to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus regardless of its origin. The Greek Cypriot administration, while accusing the Turkish Cypriot side of attempting to eradicate the heritage of the island, systematically blocks the flow of any external financial or technical assistance to Northern Cyprus for conservation purposes. The Greek Cypriot administration has, since 1963, been trying to eradicate all traces of the Turkish-Muslim heritage of Cyprus. During the period 1963-1974, mosques, shrines and other holy sites in 103 villages were destroyed. Today, the remaining Ottoman Turkish shrines including the historic Bayraktar Mosque and the Ömeriye Mosque located in Southern Cyprus, have been targets of repeated arson attacks and are disintegrating due to total neglect.

Mr. Van der Werff, General Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on the Architectural and Artistic Heritage of the Committee on Culture and Education of the Council of Europe, who visited the island with a delegation of experts to study the situation regarding cultural property both in the North and the South, reported in paragraph 5.3 of his report, which was published as a document of the Council of Europe on 2 July 1989 (AS/CULT/AA(41)1) that "We saw no churches destroyed though St. George in Limnia (in the North) was listed as such."

The report further states that "We noted with regret the complete destruction of the main mosque in Paphos (in the South). The whole area has since been flattened to give way for a widened road junction and a car park. There is no memorial to the existence of the mosque. Below the road a Turkish bath complex remains hidden in rubble and vegetation awaiting restoration. The Turkish cemetery nearby St. Sophia Mouttalos mosque is dilapidated."

More recently, Ms. Vlasta Stepova, a Council of Europe Rapporteur on Cultural Heritage, who visited both sides of the island in November 2000, also confirmed that there is no "vandalism of cultural monuments" in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

On the European Union membership issue, I would like to reiterate that the membership of the Greek Cypriot administration, purporting to act for and on behalf of the whole of Cyprus, on the basis of its unilateral application, is contrary to the 1960 Cyprus Treaties and international law. The Greek Cypriot side's aspiration to become a member of the EU is based on its ultimate objective to use its membership as a pretext to challenge the previously agreed and established parameters within the United Nations process. It is important to note that membership of the Greek Cypriot administration, under the usurped title of "government of Cyprus", would not only destroy all prospects for reconciliation between the two parties, bringing about ultimately the permanent division of the island, but would also pose a threat to peace and stability in the island and in the region.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aytuğ **Plümer**
Representative
of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus